

201-A. It has not been found to be possible to reduce to the denomination of cubic feet all the timber and firewood exploited from the forests because in the first place the small timber consisting of rafters, &c., which is by far the larger portion of the timber yield of the forests of the Northern Circle, is not measured, and in the second place no attempt is made or could be made to measure the timber on foot in the coupes which are sold to contractors and purchasers to exploit, for the magnitude and cost of such work prohibit this being done. A very rough estimate of the out-turn in cubic feet could, of course, be drawn up, but it would have no pretence to accuracy and Government have ordered that in official reports hypothetical figures should be avoided. Indeed the advantage of an estimate in cubic feet of the timber &c., that has been exploited from the forests of several divisions of a circle is open to question, for it may mislead instead of instruct. The financial statement of the year conveys information regarding the revenue yield of forests, and these figures which are correct are more useful for comparisons than mere estimates of what has been the yield in timber or firewood.

201-B. Timber and other forest produce is exploited from the forests chiefly by means of carts drawn by bullocks, as cart roads traverse the forests in all directions. When the fellings are made upon the sides of hills, of ravines, and in other places inaccessible to carts, the timber is dragged up or down, as the case may be, to the nearest cart track generally by oxen, buffaloes being largely employed; the animals are yoked to the larger end of the log and they drag it along the ground. Manual labour also is largely utilized in conveying rafters and small timber from difficult parts of the forests to roads and temporary depôts &c. Pack-bullocks are likewise used for the carriage of forest produce. The Wanjárs in the Sâtpuda forests bring bamboos and small logs of wood to the market towns of the Tápti valley by means of pack animals.

CHAPTER V.

FINANCIAL RESULTS.

202. The forest revenue of the year is the largest on record, as will be seen from the figures given below, dating from 1878-79, the year of the introduction of the Indian Forest Act, whereby forest conservancy became more real and effective than it had been before.

				Rs.
1878-79	...	...	...	4,48,850
1879-80	...	...	...	6,07,625
1880-81	...	...	...	6,12,710
1881-82	...	...	...	7,99,498
1882-83	...	...	...	9,13,532
1883-84	...	...	...	9,58,315
1884-85	...	...	...	10,08,725
1885-86	...	...	...	10,37,297
1886-87	...	...	...	9,13,101
1887-88	...	...	...	9,68,625
1888-89	...	...	...	11,60,769

203. The following statement conveys a comparison between the revenue and expenditure of the year under report and that of the preceding year:—

Official year.	Receipts.	EXPENDITURE.				Net Revenue.
		A.	B.	Total.		
		Conservancy and Works.	Establishment.			
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	
1887-88	9,68,625 3 5	2,26,095 14 1	4,97,039 9 9	7,23,135 7 10	2,45,489 11 7	
1888-89	11,60,768 8 5	2,41,836 7 4	4,85,575 12 5	7,27,412 3 9	4,33,356 4 8	
Increase	1,92,143 5 0	15,740 9 3	.....	4,276 11 11	1,87,866 9 1
Decrease	.....	.....	11,463 13 4	.....	.....

204. The distribution of receipts among the several divisions of the Northern Circle, compared with the collection of the preceding year, is given in the following table :—

No.	Division.	1887-88.	1888-89.	Increase.	Decrease.
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1	Direction ...	41 11 8	103 15 11	62 4 3	.....
2	North Thána ...	2,17,968 8 9	2,25,878 13 9	7,910 5 0	.....
3	South Thána ...	1,42,588 10 1	2,04,454 15 3	61,866 5 2	.....
4	East Khándesh ...	75,559 1 0	93,628 12 0	18,069 11 0	.....
5	West Khándesh ...	1,13,236 2 10	1,28,172 6 7	14,936 3 9	.....
6	Násik ...	82,051 4 10	93,379 15 2	11,328 10 4	.....
7	Ahmednagar ...	45,483 14 8	55,145 15 10	9,662 1 2	.....
8	Poona ...	93,819 8 9	1,01,909 4 2	8,089 11 5	.....
9	Sátára ...	68,832 5 10	85,356 2 5	16,523 12 7	.....
10	Sholápur ...	16,444 8 2	24,616 15 2	8,202 7 0	.....
11	Surat ...	55,485 9 7	99,807 12 3	44,322 2 8	.....
12	Panch Máhals ...	57,060 10 7	48,283 7 11	.....	8,777 2 8
13	Working Plans ...	53 2 8	.....	.....	53 2 8
Total ...		9,68,625 3 5	11,60,768 8 5	2,00,973 10 4	8,830 5 4

205. It will be seen that there is an increase in revenue in all the divisions of the Northern Circle with the exception of the Panch Máhals, where the sales of standing teak were practically stopped owing to a determined combination on the part of the chief Godhra wood-merchants, with the object of keeping down prices. The amounts bid at the departmental auction-sales were not nearly so satisfactory as had been anticipated and consequently the decline of revenue.

206. In the North Thána Division the increase is due to the ready way in which the coupes of the season were sold and to the good prices obtained for them, to the receipts derived from the sale of firewood which had remained unremoved at the close of last working season in the coupes of last year and had in consequence reverted to Government, and also to improved prices realized at the annual sales of hirda, bámbus and other minor produce. In the South Thána Division the increase is due to the same causes, and in addition thereto to the receipts from the clearance sale of trees upon the catchment area of the Tánša Lake, which is under construction for the water-supply of the city of Bombay. In the two Khándesh divisions there has been a larger demand for fuel, and better prices have ruled the market owing to new ginning factories and spinning mills having been established in different directions of the district. Grass and grazing have been more largely in demand owing to a scanty rainfall. In the divisions of Násik, Ahmednagar, Poona, Sátára and Sholápur, although there are decreases and increases under certain Budget heads and sub-heads, still the gross revenue of the year is in excess of that of the past year, and this is due to—

(a). Better prices at auction sales of grass and to the collection of larger sums in payment of grazing-fees, closed forests having been opened to famishing cattle in the Deccan divisions on payment of fees, owing to scarcity of fodder which the delayed monsoon rainfall had caused.

(b). Larger collections of hirdas than anticipated and to the better prices which ruled the market.

The Divisional Forest Officer, Surat, reports that the increase in revenue is chiefly due to brisk sales of timber and to the better prices obtained for the material, more people, than usual, having come from the Deccan districts to purchase wood from the upper Dángs.

207. The following table shows the expenditure under "A. Conservancy and Works" distributed among several Forest divisions of the Northern Circle as compared with that of the preceding year :—

No.	Division.	1887-88.			1888-89.			Increase.			Decrease.		
		Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
1	Direction ...	125	12	0	1,000	8	3	874	12	3	.....	
2	North Thána ...	24,900	0	0	18,839	4	4	.....			6,060	11	8
3	South Thána ...	30,589	13	11	44,241	4	0	13,651	6	1	.....	
4	East Khándesh ...	9,335	14	6	16,293	0	3	6,957	1	9	.....	
5	West Khándesh ...	16,680	2	7	17,082	5	2	402	2	7	.....	
6	Násik... ..	33,464	9	11	29,529	3	10	.....			3,935	6	1
7	Ahmednagar ...	14,955	13	5	11,808	1	0	.....			3,147	12	5
8	Poona	16,914	9	11	25,876	12	0	8,962	2	1	.....	
9	Sátára	25,722	2	10	28,693	5	4	2,971	2	6	.....	
10	Sholápur	3,844	15	2	4,522	1	2	677	2	0	.....	
11	Surat	25,567	7	2	22,074	7	8	.....			3,492	15	6
12	Panch Maháls ...	4,588	8	4	3,770	8	7	.....			817	15	9
13	Working Plans ...	19,406	0	4	18,105	9	9	.....			1,300	6	7
Total ...		2,26,095	14	1	2,41,836	7	4	34,495	13	3	18,755	4	0

208. It appears that the expenditure in some divisions is greater by Rs. 34,495-13-3, while in others, less by Rs. 18,755-4-0 than that of the past year, and that a net increase of Rs. 15,740-9-3 results upon the expenditure of the preceding year, but the actuals are less than the sanctioned Budget Estimate of the year by over Rs. 8,000.

209. The decrease of Rs. 6,060-11-8 in expenditure of the North Thána Division, as compared with that of the preceding year, is due to less expenditure having been incurred under Roads, Buildings, Compensation for lands, Surveys, Plantations and other works. On the other hand in the South Thána Division the increase was caused by very considerable expenditure incurred by the Special Officer, Thána Water Works, in purchasing occupied lands for forest protection upon the Thána Lake catchment. The disbursement of Rs. 5,999-8-0 made for acquiring occupied lands included within the forest conservancy scheme of the Bhusával Taluka, has increased the expenditure in the East Khándesh Division beyond the figure of 1887-88; while the decrease in the Násik Division is accounted for by smaller expenditure on hirda collections and on fellings of timber and firewood, especially in Peint, Dindori and Kalvan ranges. In Ahmednagar the reduction in cost of Forest Settlement Office Establishment, and smaller expenditure in purchasing lands for forests explain the decrease. Rs. 8,739 have been debited under A. VIII. c. in the Poona Division on account of the cost of the Forest surveys in the Mával Range, and this debit has raised the total expenditure beyond that of the year before. Larger collections of hirdas were made owing to a more abundant seeding in the Sátára Division, and a larger quantity of firewood was cut to meet an increased demand for the article: owing to the difficulty in obtaining labour the rates of wages had to be raised, which has been one of the reasons for the increase in expenditure in this division. There is a small increase in the Sholápur Division and is chiefly due to greater expenditure upon constructing boundary-marks, for defining forest limits as the work has been carried out more vigorously; there has likewise been increased expenditure upon plantation works and eradication of prickly pear.

210. In the two Gujarát divisions of Surat and Panch Maháls and in the Working Plans Division a decrease in expenditure is to be seen, which is due in the Surat Division to the temporary establishment not having been entertained at its full sanctioned strength and to less expenditure being incurred under Plantations, &c., and in the Panch Maháls and Working Plans Division to less expenditure in the entertainment of temporary establishments.

211. There is a decrease of Rs. 11,463-13-4 under B Establishments owing to savings in the cost of sanctioned establishments, both superior and subordinate. A charge of Rs. 2,262-14-6 has been debited to the Northern Circle on account of payments made in Bombay to officers of other provinces. This charge has no connection whatever with the forests of the Northern Circle and if the amount were transferred to the debits of the Forest Circles to which the officers belong, then the net revenue of the Northern Circle would be increased by Rs. 2,263.

If credit were to be received in the forest accounts for the grass from reserved forests in the Poona Division, which is supplied to the Commissariat Department for the use of battery and cavalry horses, Transport animals and other Government cattle belonging to the Military Department, the surplus revenue of the Northern Circle would benefit by an additional sum of at least Rs. 25,000, for some of the best grass-producing reserved forests in the neighbourhood of Poona are assigned to the Commissariat Department for the supply of grass. A Pársi firm of contractors cuts the grass, transports it and delivers it at the several stables and yards in Poona and Kirkee. The contractor is required to deliver a stated weight of grass from all the reserved forests, and any grass that may be outturned over and above the contract quantity becomes the property of the contractor. It is possible that under such arrangement the Commissariat Department may obtain grass at a comparatively low rate, and that the Commissariat Contractor's profits may be very considerable; and at the same time it is not improbable that the grass revenue sacrificed by Government in the Forest Department may exceed the value of the gain in the Military Department over what would be the cost of an equal quantity of grass obtained in the open market. Villagers are complaining of the closure of sources of fodder grass supply by the grass alienation to the Commissariat Department against their agricultural cattle. Departmental cutting, transport and delivery of the grass, whether undertaken by the Forest or the Commissariat Department, would not, it may be assumed, prove satisfactory. But there seems no good reason why the Commissariat should not purchase in the open market, by inviting tenders for the supply, grass in the same way as they purchase firewood and other stores. And the Conservator ventures to believe that recourse to public competition without requiring certain reserved forests to be specially assigned for Military grass supply would be productive of considerable financial advantage.

CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL REMARKS.

212. At the commencement of the year the Conservator's camp was at Pálghar in the Máhím range of the North Thána division. Mr. Wilkins, the Divisional Forest Officer, and Mr. Fry, the Divisional Forest Officer, Working Plans, were with him. The Collector of the District was met in camp at Máhím when forest matters were discussed. From Pálghar the Conservator marched with these two officers through the Máhím and Bassein ranges, and on the way many compartments were visited, and the operations of the contractors in exploiting timber out of the coupes were inspected. The contractors complained of the difficulty experienced by them in obtaining labour and carriage for the felling of trees and the removal of wood, and of the small local demand; they attributed much of this to the departmental competition in local supply, whereby coast villagers, instead of going to the coupes for their requirements in forest produce, obtained permits from the Forest Department, mostly upon specially favoured rates, and drew their supplies direct from the forests, employing local labour and carriage for the extraction and transport of the material.

213. After leaving the North Thána division the Conservator proceeded into the Karjat range of South Thána, and the Divisional Forest Officer, Mr. Millett, encamped with him at Dhamot near Neral, where they were joined by the Divisional Forest Officer, Working Plans, and were employed up to the middle of May in inspecting the forests upon the northern slopes of the Máthérán range, and the allotments which had been made to the Thákurs for "ráb cultivation" upon the terraces. It was found that these men, although they had been employed on wages in constructing special forest boundary-marks to demarcate in a clear unmistakable and detailed manner, the boundaries of their allotments, and of the reserved forests, which were conterminous, and could have no misunderstanding regarding the boundaries, had encroached with their "shifting cultivation" upon the reserved forests, and had made clearings by the axe and fire. The Conservator with the Divisional Forest Officers visited the Col-